DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 304 736 CS 506 593

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TITLE The Influence of Gender on the Uncertainty Reduction Strategies of Disclosure, Interrogation, and Nonverbal Immediacy.
PUB DATE Feb 89
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Speech Communication Association (Spokane, WA, February 17-21, 1989.) Project partially funded by a Faculty Research Grant from California State University at Fullerton.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communication Research; Higher Education; *Interpersonal Communication; *Nonverbal Communication; *Questioning Techniques; *Sex Differences; Surveys
IDENTIFIERS Communication Strategies; Self Disclosure Questionnaire; *Uncertainty Reduction

ABSTRACT

A study examined gender differences in the uses of uncertainty reduction strategies (self-disclosure, interrogative strategies, nonverbal immediacy, and other's self-disclosure) and their interrelationships with attributional confidence (uncertainty reduction). The subjects, 853 students from three western universities, participated in a survey soliciting information on the uses of uncertainty reduction strategies with a same-sexed, equal-status acquaintance. Results revealed significant gender differences in the uses of uncertainty reduction strategies. While both males and females used another person's self-disclosure to reduce uncertainty, the other person's disclosures were more important for reducing women's relational uncertainty. Also, men felt that their own self-disclosures helped them reduce relational uncertainty, but women relied more on interrogation strategies and nonverbal immediacy to reduce uncertainty. Furthermore, gender differences were also noted in how these strategies were used to increase attributional confidence. While both men and women primarily used their own self-disclosure to elicit other's self-disclosure, women also incorporated use of interrogative strategies and greater use of nonverbal immediacy (smiling, eye contact, touching). Men tended to rely more on interrogation strategies. (Four tables of data and 38 references are attached.) (MM)

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THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON THE UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES OF DISCLOSURE, INTERROGATION, AND NONVERBAL IMMEDIACY

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Paper presented to the ORWAC Division of the Western Speech Communication Association, Spokane, Washington, February 1989.

This project was partially funded by a Faculty Research Grant from California State University, Fullerton.

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ABSTRACT

Uncertainty reduction underlies relational development, i.e., relationships develop as we learn more about each other. The present study examines gender differences in the uses of uncertainty reduction strategies--self-disclosure, interrogative strategies, nonverbal immediacy, and other's self-disclosure--and their interrelationships with attributional confidence (uncertainty reduction). A total of 853 college students participated in a survey soliciting information on the uses of uncertainty reduction strategies with a same-sexed, equal-status acquaintance. Significant differences were found in the uses of uncertainty reduction strategies by men and women. Further, gender differences were also noted in how these strategies are used to increase attributional confidence. Implications for extant theory and future research are discussed.

THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON THE UNCERTAINTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES OF DISCLOSURE, INTERROGATION, AND NONVERBAL IMMEDIACY

INTRODUCTION

It is axiomatic that communication is the foundation of interpersonal relationships. Yet for years scholars in the field have struggled with various theories which attempt to explain the relationships, but not necessarily the communication which led to those relationships. Recently though, scholars have focused upon the nature of the communication which forms those relationships. One theory which seeks to explain the nature of such communication is Uncertainty Reduction Theory. As detailed by Berger & Calabrese (1975) the theory posits that a primary motive for communication is to understand both the self and the other in an interaction situation. Communication generates understanding (or a reduction of uncertainty) and serves as the basis of relationships.

The desire for uncertainty reduction is particularly strong in the early stages of relationships where the parties know little about one another. In order to choose appropriate behaviors to interact with one another, communicators must be able to predict each other's behavior. Specifically, the theory posits that a communicator is motivated to reduce uncertainty about another where he or she sees the relationship as potentially rewarding, the other engages in deviant behavior or future interaction with the other is probable (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

Uncertainty Reduction Strategies

In an elaboration of the theory, Berger (1979) argues that there are three major classes of strategies which communicators use to reduce uncertainty: passive, active, and interactive. Passive strategies involve

observation of the other from a distance. Active strategies include the seeking of information about the other from sources outside that other. Interactive strategies are based on soliciting information directly from that other. Among the interactive strategies are interrogation (asking questions of the other) and self disclosure (Berger, 1979). The use of nonverbal expressive affiliativeness (or immediacy) is also an interactive strategy which aids the reduction of uncertainty by increasing comfort between the parties (Berger, 1987).

While research has examined all three types of strategies proposed, much of the recent research has focused upon the use of interactive strategies (Berger, 1987). For example, Berger & Kellerman (1983) found that communicators use question asking, disclosure and target relaxation to obtain information in face-to-face interactions. Subsequently, they found that information seekers used positive nonverbal (immediacy) behaviors (Kellerman & Berger, 1984).

A number of studies have also made cross-cultural comparisons of the use of interactive strategies. For example, Gudykunst and Nishida (1984) found that Japanese subjects indicated a lesser intent to use self-disclosure and interrogation to reduce uncertainty than did American subjects. Kim and Yoon (1987), comparing initial intracultural interactions of American and Korean students, found a greater tendency to talk or interrogate more about background than personal interests and attitude or sociability. They also found that U.S. students used more self-disclosure than Korean students. Gudykunst, Chua and Gray (1986) found that cultural differences, as well as the stage of a relationship, influenced the use of uncertainty reduction strategies.

Little research, however, has focused on the effects of gender upon the uncertainty reduction process. Gudykunst and Hammer (1984), using mean

summed scale scores, did find that females had a higher intent to self-disclose than males in initial encounters, but did not find significant differences on intent to interrogate or intent to display nonverbal affiliativeness. This study did not examine the use of specific individual strategies (such as asking about one's family), but rather examined only summed scales.

Despite the lack of significant findings as to gender differences in the use of uncertainty reduction strategies, there is reason to believe that gender may be an important variable affecting the process of uncertainty reduction. For example, the research on self-disclosure has yielded some gender differences. Early research seemed to indicate that women engage in more self-disclosure than do men (Jourard, 1971). However, subsequent research has indicated that the relationship between gender and disclosure is complex. In a systematic review of the literature, Cline (1983) found that the studies were almost equally divided between those which did and those which did not find gender differences in disclosure behavior. This may be because males and females disclose about different topics and to different targets. For example, Rosenfeld, Civikly and Harton (1979) found that males disclose more to strangers than do females and are more likely to disclose superficial material such as work, attitudes, and opinions. Likewise, Lombardo and Berzonsky (1979) found that males and females do not differ in amount of disclosure on such topics as politics, but that women disclose more on topics such as religion and sex (see also, Haas, 1979; Haas & Sherman, 1982, 1984; Komarovsky, 1967; Rubin, Hill, Peplau & Dunkel-Schetter, 1980). Thus the question is not simply one of disclosure or no disclosure; rather, there are topic and target variances in the amount of disclosure by males and females.

The research on interrogation also suggests some possible gender differences. While much controversy was generated by Lakoff's (1975) claim that women use more questions than men, research is divided about support for her position. For example, Rosenfeld (1966) found that in same-gender dyads, a greater proportion of females' comments consisted of answers to questions than did males' comments. Fishman (1978), studying married couples, found that women asked three times more questions than did men. Likewise, Stafford (1984), studying mixed gender dyads in initial encounters, found that females asked significantly more questions than did males. Thus, it may be that while in a mixed gender situation, females are more likely to ask questions than males, the clear difference may not appear when comparing same gender dyads.

Research in nonverbal immediacy likewise has revealed some gender differences. Stewart, Cooper and Friedley (1986) argue that females tend to be more immediate than men because parents express more immediacy toward female children; thus females are more comfortable being immediate. While the relationship is complex, Pearson's (1985) review of the literature indicates that women establish more eye contact than do men, smile more than men, and are touched more than men.

Given the past research that there are gender differences in self-disclosure based on topic and target, potential differences in interrogation behavior, and differences in the use of nonverbal immediacy, it seems that males and females would use these strategies differently in the uncertainty reduction process. Thus, we sought to examine the following questions: 1) Do males and females use different self-disclosure strategies in getting to know same-sex acquaintances? 2) Do males and females use different interrogative strategies in getting to know same-sex acquaintances? 3) Do males and females use different nonverbal immediacy

behaviors in getting to know same-sex acquaintances?

Attributional Confidence

The use of disclosure, interrogation, and immediacy behaviors is not a random event. Rather, the theory posits that these strategies are specifically aimed at reducing uncertainty, viz. allowing a person to understand what is occuring in the interaction (retroactive confidence) and making a person feel more confident about her or his behavioral choices in interacting with another (proactive confidence). While Berger & Calabrese (1975) did not originally offer an operationalization of the concept of uncertainty, Clatterbuck has subsequently argued that, "For the individual, reducing uncertainty and increasing attributional confidence become synonymous" (1979, p. 148). Attributional confidence is defined as the perceived adequacy of information with which to explain behavior occuring and to predict appropriate future behaviors (Clatterbuck, 1979). It is thus the converse of uncertainty.

Clatterbuck's (1979) research indicated that attributional confidence is an appropriate measure of uncertainty reduction. Further, he found that proactive confidence and retroactive confidence are highly correlated. Thus, either may accurately serve as a measure of reduced uncertainty.

Uncertainty reduction theory then posits that attributional confidence should be increased by the use of uncertainty reduction strategies. Research supports this proposition. Gudykunst and Hammer (1984) found that increased nonverbal immediacy increased attributional confidence. Gudykunst (1985b) found that the use of interactive strategies increased attributional confidence. Likewise, Gudykunst, Yang and Nishida (1985), examining data from three cultures, found that the use of interactive strategies had positive effects on attributional confidence.

Some research has attempted to explore the relationships among gender, interaction and attributional confidence. Gudykunst, Sodetani & Sonada (1985) did not find significant gender or dyadic composition effects either for the use of uncertainty reduction strategies or attributional confidence. Gudykunst and Hammer (1984) found males' and females' use of interactive strategies and attributional confidence was affected by dyadic composition but there were no significant differences in the patterns of correlations when males and females were examined separately. Thus the relationship here, if any, is uncertain. Consequently, we were led to identify our fourth question: Are there gender differences in the interrelationships of attributional confidence and uses of uncertainty reduction strategies?

METHODS

Sample

A total of 853 college students from three western universities volunteered to participate in the study. In terms of the sample's demography, the average age was 21.9 (sd=4.9), 55.8% were female, and 64.6% were Caucasian.

Questionnaire

The first step in the construction of the questionnaire was to determine the characteristics of the person whom the subjects would be considering in making their responses to the items measuring uncertainty reduction strategies. Research on uncertainty reduction indicates a number of demographic influences on the process, viz., the ethnicity of the other person (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1984; Gudykunst, Sodetani & Sonoda, 1985), the other's gender (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1984), the level of intimacy in the relationship (Gudykunst, Chua & Gray, 1986; Gudykunst, Sodetani & Sonoda, 1985), and the status differences between the two communicators (Berger,

1979). In light of these influences, we attempted to control for these factors by specifying that the person that the subject be thinking of when responding to the questionnaire items be: (1) the same ethnicity, (2) the same sex, (3) an acquaintance, and (4) an equal-status individual, i.e., a fellow student. To commit the subjects to thinking about a specific person meeting these characteristics, we asked them to write the first name of the person they had in mind. The questionnaire referred to this person as "Person A."

The next stages in questionnaire construction were the operationalization of the uncertainty reduction strategies. Four operationalizations were required: (1) self-disclosure strategies, (2) interrogation strategies, (3) nonverbal immediacy, and (4) other-disclosure strategies. Based upon a review of relevant uncertainty reduction research (Gudykunst, 1985a; Gudykunst, 1985b), a twelve-item scale was chosen to operationalize self-disclosure strategies. Although all twelve items are presented in Table 1, two examples of these items are: "What I think and feel about religion; my personal religious views" and "What it takes to hurt my feelings." The twelve self-disclosure items were rated on a three-point scale: 0=I have <u>not</u> talked about this information, 1=I have talked about this information in general terms, and 2=I have talked about this information in specific and detailed terms. The interitem reliability for these twelve items was fairly high (Cronbach's alpha=.85; Cronbach, 1951).

Interrogation strategies were operationalized via a modified version of Gudykunst and Hammer's (1984) intent to interrogate scale. (These items were originally drawn from Gudykunst & Nishida's 1984 disclosure scale). The scale was modified to reflect actual behavior rather than intentions. This six-item scale consisted of content areas about which the subject had

questioned Person A. The six content areas were: family, school major, hobbies and crafts, religious background, political attitude, and ideas toward marriage. These items were rated on a three-point scale: 0=I have never asked about this, 1=I have sometimes asked about this, and 3=I have frequently asked about this. The interitem reliability for these six items was only moderate (Cronbach's alpha=.71), owing possibly to the variety of the content areas and the fewer number of items.

Nonverbal immediacy was operationalized as a four-point scale based upon the research of Gudykunst and Nishida (1984; see also, Gudykunst, 1983). The scale items asked the subjects how often they engaged in four nonverbal immediacy behaviors: smiling at the other, looking at the other's eyes, standing close to the other, and shaking hands or touching the other in some way. These items were rated on a three-point scale: 0=I have never done this, 1=I have sometimes done this, and 2=I have frequently done this. Interitem reliability for these four items was again only moderate (Cronbach's alpha=.74).

The last uncertainty reduction strategy to be operationalized was other's self-disclosure. To maintain consistency with the self-disclosure items noted above, the twelve-item scale used to operationalize the subject's own self-disclosure was adapted to measure other's self-disclosure (cf. Table 3). The converted response scale consisted of three-points: 0=Person A has told me nothing about this aspect of him/herself, 1=Person A has talked about this item in general terms with me, and 2=Person A has talked about this item in detail with me. Interitem reliability for these twelve items was fairly high (Cronbach's alpha=.83).

The last step in questionnaire construction was the operationalization of the perceived level of uncertainty in the relationship between the subject and the other person. This construct was measured via

Clatterbuck's (1979) Attributional Confidence Scale. The scale consists of seven items designed to assess the degree to which respondents are confident in predicting the behavior, attitudes, feelings, and emotions of the other person (cf. Table 4 for the items). Clatterbuck (1979) presents evidence for the unidimensionality, internal reliability, and validity of the scale. All of the items were measured on a three-point scale: 0=I am not at all certain about this aspect of Person A, 1=I am somewhat certain about this aspect of Person A, and 2=I am very certain about this aspect of Person A. The interitem reliability for this scale in this study was fairly high (Cronbach's alpha=.86).

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the self-disclosure items. Overall, the greatest levels of self-disclosure were on work/school pressures (mean=1.46), work/school goals (1.45), and career choice (1.19). The lowest levels of self-disclosure were on medical issues (.34), health issues (.40), and how one's feelings are hurt (.45). There were also significant gender differences in the levels of self-disclosure on five topics. Males disclosed more than females on two topics: personal views on sexual matters (M mean=.76 vs F mean=.63; $t=2.63$, $df=851$, $p<.009$) and personal accomplishments (M mean=.77, F mean=.63; $t=3.14$, $df=851$, $p<.002$). On the other hand, females disclosed more than males on three topics: how one's feelings are hurt (F mean=.52, M mean=.37; $t=-3.38$, $df=851$, $p<.001$), feelings about parenting (F mean=.72, M mean=.58; $t=-2.79$, $df=851$, $p<.005$), and work/school pressures (F mean=1.50, M mean=1.41; $t=-2.05$, $df=851$, $p<.041$). In general, men seemed more disclosive of personal accomplishments and sexual matters, while women tended to be more disclo-

sive of their sensitive feelings, work/school problems, and parenting.

The means and standard deviations for the items measuring subjects' interrogation topics are presented in Table 2. Overall, individuals tended to ask more questions of same-sexed acquaintances in regards to their major (mean=1.48), hobbies or crafts (1.21), and family (1.02), and fewer questions about acquaintance's political attitude (.41) and religious background (.47). Significant gender differences were found on five of the six interrogation topics. Males inquired more than females on two topics: acquaintance's political attitudes (M mean=.56, F mean=.29; t=6.34, df=851, p<.001) and acquaintance's hobbies or crafts (M mean=1.29, F mean=1.15; t=2.96, df=851, p<.028). Females, more than males, inquired of acquaintance's family (F mean=1.15, M mean=.86; t=-6.28, df=851, p<.001), ideas toward marriage (F mean=.83, M mean=.58; t=-4.66, df=851, p<.001), and academic major (F mean=1.51, M mean=1.42; t=-2.20, df=851, p<.028). Generally, our male subjects inquired more into the acquaintance's politics and recreational activities, while female subjects asked more about their acquaintance's families and marital attitudes.

Table 2 also presents the descriptive statistics for the four nonverbal immediacy items. There were significant gender differences on all items. Female subjects reported more smiling (F mean=1.90, M mean=1.52; t=-12.33, df=851, p<.001), more eye contact (F mean=1.85, M mean=1.60; t=-7.87, df=851, p<.001) and closer proximity (F mean=1.42, M mean=1.22; t=-4.22, df=851, p<.001) with acquaintances. Male subjects reported more touching than did female subjects (M mean=1.32, F mean=1.01; t=5.91, df=851, p<.001). In essence, females show more nonverbal immediacy through smiling, eye contact, and proximity, while males use more touching behaviors.

The descriptive statistics for the items measuring other's self-disclosure are presented in Table 3. A pattern of results similar to subjects' own self-disclosure emerges for these data. Overall, greater levels of other's disclosure were reported for other's work/school goals (mean=1.47), other's work/school pressures (1.43), and other's career choices (1.28), while lesser levels of disclosure were reported for other's medical record (.40), health worries (.43), and feelings about religion (.52). Significant gender differences were found for six disclosure topics. Subjects reported that female-others disclosed more than male-others on four topics: things that make other furious (F mean=.95, M mean=.73; t=-4.33, df=851, p<.001), what hurts the other's feelings (F mean=.60, M mean=.41; t=-4.04, df=851, p<.001), other's ideas about parenting (F mean=.75, F mean=.56; t=-3.79, df=851, p<.001), and other's school/work pressures (F mean=1.49, M mean=1.36; t=-3.10, df=851, p<.002). Male-others were reported to disclose more than female-others on two topics: other's worries about health (M mean=.48, F mean=.38; t=2.24, df=851, p<.026) and other's accomplishments that make them proud (M mean=.86, F mean=.76; t=2.04, df=851, p<.042). Again, females seem to disclose more about about sensitive issues, work/school problems, and parenting; males, on the other hand, seem to focus disclosure on personal accomplishments.

Finally, the attributional confidence items' means and standard deviations are presented in Table 4. Overall, subjects indicated they felt more certain about the other person's feelings about the relationship (mean=1.36) and what the other's attitudes are (1.18). On the other hand, subjects felt less attributional confidence in terms of the other's feelings and emotions (.91) and knowing the other very well (.95). Only one of the attributional confidence items significantly differed for the

genders: female subjects indicated more confidence than males in knowing what the acquaintance feels about the relationship (F mean=1.41, M mean=1.36; t=-3.08, df=851, p<.002).

Regression Analyses

The above normative analyses provide some insight into gender differences in the use of uncertainty reduction strategies, however they do not inform us as to the interrelationships among the strategies. Multiple regressions should ameliorate this need. Since each of the scales attained satisfactory levels of internal reliability, mean summed scores were computed and then examined through multiple regression. More specifically, male and female regression equations were computed for attributional confidence, and male and female regression equations were computed for other's level of disclosure.

The multiple regressions of attributional confidence included other's level of disclosure, level of self-disclosure, use of interrogation strategies, and nonverbal immediacy. The regression equations for attributional confidence differed for the data from male and female subjects. For the male subjects, three significant beta coefficients were found: other disclosure (beta=.40, F=27.4, p<.001), nonverbal immediacy (beta=.24, F=37.1, p<.001), and self-disclosure (beta=.23, F=8.3, p<.004). For the male subjects, use of interrogative strategies did not add a significant amount of explained variance in the stepwise regression equation of attributional confidence. For the female subjects, on the other hand, three significant beta coefficients were found: other's disclosure (beta=.58, F=161.6, p<.0001), use of interrogation strategies (beta=.17, F=13.5, p<.001), and nonverbal immediacy (beta=.10, F=6.7, p<.01). For the female subjects, level of self-disclosure did not add a

significant amount of explained variance in the stepwise regression equation of attributional confidence.

The stepwise multiple regressions for the level of other's disclosure included subject's level of self-disclosure, use of interrogation strategies, and amount of nonverbal immediacy. For the male subjects, only two variables proved to account for a significant amount of the variance in other's disclosure: self-disclosure (beta=.70, F=321.3, $p<.0001$) and interrogation strategies (beta=.23, F=33.2, $p<.001$). Subject's level of nonverbal immediacy did not add a significant amount of explained variance. For the female subjects, all three variables entered the stepwise regression equation for other's level of disclosure: self-disclosure (beta=.72, F=602.1, $p<.0001$), interrogation strategies (beta=.20, F=44.7, $p<.007$), and nonverbal immediacy (beta=.08, F=7.3, $p<.007$). As with the regression equations for attributional confidence, the regression equations for other's disclosure differed for males and females.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide some tentative answers regarding the questions that motivated this research and further our understanding of the processes of uncertainty reduction for men and women. First and foremost, the study found that there were gender differences in the interrelationships of levels of attributional confidence (certainty regarding the relationship) and uses of various uncertainty reduction strategies. While both males and females used another person's self-disclosure to reduce uncertainty, other's disclosures were more important for reducing women's relational uncertainty. Also, men felt that their own self-disclosures helped them reduce relational uncertainty, but women relied more on interrogation strategies and nonverbal immediacy to reduce

uncertainty. Further, men's use of interrogation strategies did not seem to help reduce their uncertainty beyond other uncertainty reduction strategies. This may be due to the fact that men's questioning strategies are not used as much or used as effectively as women's use of this strategy.

Differences in attributional confidence influences may also be based on gender differences in the sources of confidence about a relationship. It appears that males develop a feeling of confidence in their knowledge about a relationship when they express their own feelings. Thus, their confidence is highly influenced by a self-directed orientation. On the other hand, women feel confidence in a relationship when they are able to ask questions of the other person; thus, they maintain an other-directed orientation.

Another significant finding is that there are gender differences in the solicitation of another person's self-disclosures. While both men and women primarily use one's own self-disclosure to elicit other's self-disclosure, women also incorporate use of interrogative strategies and greater use of nonverbal immediacy (smiling, eye contact) in encouraging other's disclosures. Men tend to rely more on interrogation strategies. It would appear that women are not only concerned with establishing a verbal climate for uncertainty reduction but also developing a nonverbal climate for evoking acquaintance's self-disclosures. This finding is consistent with Stewart, et al.'s (1986), argument that women are more sensitive than men to visual nonverbal cues. Their greater sensitivity to this information, likewise, causes to use such cues more frequently.

Differences in factors influencing other disclosure are also consistent with prior research which has found that men use more direct strategies to obtain information from others (such as asking questions)

while women use more indirect strategies. Johnson (1976) argues that this is because men have a greater need to exert direct control in their conversations while women feel that they are more effective by using indirect strategies (see also, Rosenfeld, 1979). This is likewise consistent with the argument above that men maintain a more self-directed focus, while women maintain a more other-directed focus.

The study also affirmatively answers our research questions as to whether there are gender differences in the uses of the uncertainty reduction strategies of self-disclosure, interrogation strategies, and nonverbal immediacy. In terms of men and women's uses of self-disclosure, women tended to disclose more than men on the topics of their sensitive feelings, work/school problems, and views on parenting. While greater disclosure on parenting may be due to the more nurturing nature of the feminine sex-role, the greater disclosures regarding sensitive feelings and work/school problems may be more related to women's willingness to take greater risks in their self-disclosure. That is, women seem more willing than men to share information that might make them seem vulnerable. Men, on the other hand, disclose more than women on their personal accomplishments, thereby attempting to enhance their personal image. These findings are consistent with prior research which concluded that women disclose more than men on family and emotional matters (e.g., Haas & Sherman, 1984, 1982; Rosenfeld, 1979). This is consistent with Rosenfeld's (1979) argument that men have a higher need to control relationships than do women and thus avoid disclosure of information which would make them seem weak or cause them to lose control in the relationship.

There were also gender differences in uses of interrogative strategies. Men, more than women, asked questions regarding the other

person's political attitudes and recreational activities. Women asked more questions than men regarding the other person's family and marital ideas. The men's topical areas seem more impersonal in nature, while the women's topical areas seem personal. This finding appears consistent with the tendancy of women to take greater personal risks in their attempts to reduce relational uncertainty.

Finally, the study found that use of nonverbal immediacy cues differ between men and women. In their use of this uncertainty reduction strategy, women tended more than men to use smiling, eye contact, and closer proximity, while men used greater touching than women. This is consistent with prior research attesting to women's greater use of smiling (Henley, 1977; Lau, 1982; Parlee, 1979), greater eye contact (Stewart, et al., 1986), and closer proxemic behavior (Evans & Howard, 1973; Freedman, O'Hanlon, Oltman & Witkin, 1972). It is posited that women use these nonverbal behaviors to create a supportive climate for the other's communication.

The finding that men used more touching behaviors than women was somewhat surprising. Past research has tended to indicate that in same-sexed dyads women touch women more frequently than men touch men. This finding could represent a change in social norms regarding touching behavior. However, we think that it is more likely that the finding is a result of our methodology. We specifically asked about the frequency with which the subject would "shake hands with Person A or touch in some other way." Since shaking hands was suggested as a primary touching behavior, we believe that subjects responded primarily based on this specific touching behavior. Consequently, this finding may not be generalizable to other forms of touching behavior.

Future research should explore other contexts where men and women's

uncertainty reduction strategies may vary. Two such contexts which seem most significant are cross-gender partners and more involved relational states. Past research indicates preliminary evidence that conversational behaviors, self-disclosure, and nonverbal immediacy vary from same-sex to mixed-sex dyads (e.g., Cash, 1975; Johnson, 1976; Stewart, et al., 1986). Future research should test these findings in light of uncertainty reduction theory and research. Further, the present study examined the nature of uncertainty and its reduction between acquaintances. Future research should examine the dynamics of uncertainty reduction processes over varying stages of relationships, e.g., friendship, intimacy, disengagement.

The present and proposed research should better inform us of the role of various uncertainty reduction strategies in relational understanding and definition. This should enhance our theory of uncertainty reduction and its dynamics in varying contexts. Further, our knowledge of gender differences in relational development will be increased.

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TABLE 1

Descriptive Statistics for Self-Disclosure Items

	Overall	Male	Female	t	p
What I think and feel about religion; my personal religious views	.48* .67	.47 .70	.48 .65	-.53	n.s.
My personal views on sexual morality; how I feel that I and others ought to behave in sexual matters	.69 .74	.76 .74	.63 .73	2.63	.009
My feeling about how parents ought to deal with children	.66 .74	.58 .72	.72 .74	-2.79	.005
What I find to be the worst pressures and strains in work/school	1.46 .61	1.41 .63	1.50 .59	-2.05	.041
My ambitions and goals in work/school	1.45 .61	1.44 .60	1.47 .62	-.68	n.s.
How I feel about my choice of career	1.45 .61	1.44 .60	1.47 .62	-.68	n.s.
How I feel about the choice of career that I have made; whether or not I'm satisfied with it	1.19 .70	1.23 .67	1.16 .72	1.57	n.s.
The kinds of things that make me furious	.84 .74	.81 .73	.87 .74	-1.06	n.s.
What it takes to hurt my feelings	.45 .67	.37 .60	.52 .70	-3.38	.001
The kinds of things that make me especially proud of myself, full of self-esteem or self-respect	.69 .68	.77 .68	.63 .67	3.14	.002
Whether or not I have any long-range worries or concerns about my health, for example, cancer, AIDS, diabetes	.40 .63	.42 .63	.38 .63	.99	n.s.
My past record of illness and medical treatment	.34 .60	.33 .60	.34 .61	-.28	n.s.
Whether or not I now make a special effort to keep fit, healthy, and attractive, e.g., exercise, diet.	1.00 .72	1.02 .71	.97 .73	1.02	n.s.

*Top value is the mean; bottom value is the standard deviation.

TABLE 2

Descriptive Statistics for Interrogation and Nonverbal Immediacy

Interrogation Topics	Over all	Men	Women	t	p
Person A's family	1.02*	.86	1.15	-6.28	.001
	.67	.67	.64		
Person A's major	1.48	1.42	1.51	-2.20	.028
	.60	.59	.60		
Person A's hobbies or crafts	1.21	1.29	1.15	2.96	.003
	.69	.69	.70		
Person A's religious background	.47	.47	.47	-.02	n.s.
	.66	.68	.65		
Person A's political attitude	.41	.56	.29	6.34	.001
	.63	.68	.55		
Person A's ideas toward marriage	.72	.58	.83	-4.66	.001
	.76	.73	.77		
Nonverbal Immediacy Items					
Smile at Person A	1.73	1.52	1.90	-12.33	.001
	.48	.57	.31		
Look at Person A in the eyes	1.74	1.60	1.85	-7.87	.001
	.48	.54	.39		
Stand close to Person A (less than an arm's reach)	1.33	1.22	1.42	-4.22	.001
	.69	.69	.67		
Shake hands with Person A or touch in some other way	1.15	1.32	1.01	5.91	.001
	.76	.67	.80		

*Top value is the mean; bottom value is the standard deviation.

TABLE 3

Descriptive Statistics for Other's Self-Disclosure Items

	Over-all	Male	Female	t	p
Person A's feelings about religion	.52 .69	.50 .68	.53 .70	-.50	n.s.
Person A's views on sexual morality; how Person A feels others ought to behave in sexual matters	.74 .74	.78 .73	.71 .76	1.45	n.s.
Person A's feelings about how parents ought to deal with children	.66 .73	.56 .70	.75 .74	-3.79	.001
Person A's worst pressures and strains in work/school	1.43 .62	1.36 .62	1.49 .61	-3.10	.002
Person A's ambitions and goals in work/school	1.47 .61	1.45 .60	1.49 .62	-1.09	n.s.
Person A's feelings about the choice of career that he/she has made	1.28 .71	1.31 .68	1.26 .73	.87	n.s.
The kinds of things that make Person A furious	.85 .74	.73 .69	.95 .76	-4.33	.001
What it takes to hurt Person A's feelings	.52 .70	.41 .62	.60 .74	-4.04	.001
The kinds of things that make Person A especially proud of him/herself, full of self-esteem	.81 .69	.86 .68	.76 .70	2.04	.042
Whether or not Person A has any long-range worries about his/her health	.43 .65	.48 .67	.38 .64	2.24	.026
Person A's past record of illness and treatment	.40 .65	.36 .63	.39 .66	-.61	n.s.
Whether or not Person A makes a special effort to keep fit, healthy, and attractive	.95 .74	.95 .72	.95 .76	-.05	n.s.

*Top value is the mean; bottom value is the standard deviation.

TABLE 4

Descriptive Statistics for Attributional Confidence Items

	Over-all	Male	Female	t	p
I know how Person A will behave.	1.07*	1.06	1.07	-.23	n.s.
	.61	.63	.60		
I know how Person A feels about me (likes/dislikes me).	1.36	1.29	1.41	-3.08	.002
	.58	.59	.56		
I know what Person A's values are.	1.04	1.05	1.03	.37	n.s.
	.66	.65	.67		
I know what Person A's attitudes are.	1.18	1.19	1.18	.12	n.s.
	.61	.58	.63		
I know what Person A's feelings and emotions are.	.91	.87	.94	-1.50	n.s.
	.69	.67	.71		
I can understand the way Person A feels about himself/herself.	1.03	.98	1.06	-1.69	n.s.
	.66	.63	.68		
I know Person A very well.	.95	1.00	.91	1.88	n.s.
	.68	.67	.69		

*Top value is mean; bottom value is standard deviation.